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poetry. But there is less dispute as to what is human. Perhaps that is why the verses of John Godfrey Saxe still appear and reappear in the press, though he has been dead more than a quarter of a century.

He realized that the mission of humour was to restore the balance which is frequently lost by so much that is drudgery in life. A vein of jests is soon worked out, but humour is a perennial flower.

## THE PRINTING BILL

By GEORGE H. CARTER, *Clerk, Joint Committee on Printing, Congress of the United States*

I am directed by the Joint Committee on Printing of the Congress to thank you for this opportunity of again discussing the Printing Bill before your round table. The Joint Committee greatly appreciates the continued and helpful interest that the American Library Association has manifested in its efforts to bring about much-needed reforms in the printing and distribution of government publications. On behalf of the committee, I desire especially to express its appreciation of the generous co-operation of your genial chairman, Mr. Godard, in the consideration of these provisions of the Printing Bill that are of principal concern to libraries. The committee regards as of the highest importance the distribution of government publications to libraries and, I am sure, earnestly desires to have that distribution made in the best possible manner that the fullest information may be freely available to all the people concerning the affairs of their government. With this object in view, the Printing Bill has been presented to Congress.

When I had the pleasure of addressing your round table at Washington in 1914, the bill was pending before both Houses of the Sixty-third Congress. Subsequently, the bill was passed by the House at the third session of that Congress and was favorably reported to the Senate, but it was not reached for consideration in that body before the end of the Congress. The bill was re-introduced in both Houses at the beginning of the Sixty-fourth Congress and has again been favorably reported from the Printing Committees of the House and

the Senate. In the House, the bill has been considered on two calendar Wednesdays of the present session and about half completed without any material changes, other than the rejection of the proposed valuation plan for the distribution of documents by members of Congress, which the committee expects to have restored before the bill is passed by the House. Under a new rule of that body, the bill had to be laid aside as "unfinished business" until the Printing Committee is reached again on the Wednesday call of committees, which probably will not occur until next session. In the Senate, the bill is now well to the front of its calendar of business, but will hardly be taken up for consideration at this session unless Congress remains in Washington until late in the summer. The committee is very hopeful, nevertheless, that the bill will become a law before the close of the Sixty-fourth Congress.

Representative Barnhart of Indiana, who put the bill through the House in the Sixty-third Congress, is again in charge of the measure in that body, while Senator Fletcher of Florida, chairman of the Joint Committee on Printing, has charge of the bill in the Senate, assisted by Senator Smoot of Utah, who, as chairman of the Printing Investigation Commission, introduced the bill in the Sixty-first Congress and secured its passage by the Senate in the Sixty-second Congress.

### Senate and House Bill Identical

The Senate and House Bills (S. R. 1107 and H. R. 8664) are identical except for a few minor amendments. The two committee

reports (S. Report 183 and H. Report 32) are also similar, thus clearly showing that the Senate and House Printing committees are united in their support of the measure, as they were in previous Congresses. It was the purpose in submitting the bill to the Senate and the House at the same time not only to give added strength to the measure by favorably reporting it in both Houses, but also to have the bill in position to be urged for consideration in whichever body the opportunity might first present itself. Thus, if the bill passes the House first, the Senate committee will substitute the House bill for its own measure in the Senate with such amendments as it may then desire to offer. The House committee will do likewise, if the Senate should enact its bill first.

As submitted to the present Congress, the bill has been thoroughly revised and rearranged in the constant effort of the committee to perfect the measure, but the principal provisions are substantially the same as in the bill of the Sixty-third Congress, which I discussed at some length at your Washington meeting. I trust you will pardon me, therefore, if I may indulge in some repetition of the views then expressed.

Though the bill is a complete revision and codification of all the laws relating to the public printing and binding, and the operation of the Government Printing Office, I assume that you are interested chiefly in the provisions relating to the distribution of government publications to libraries and accordingly shall confine myself to that phase of the bill.

#### **Depository libraries**

First, let me present those provisions that relate especially to the libraries which are designated by law as depositories of government publications, for it is in those libraries that Congress is particularly concerned. The bill continues the present plan of designating certain libraries throughout the country as depositories of the government's publications which are supplied by the Superintendent of Public Documents.

These designations are made in section 79 of the new bill, which provides, in addition to the government, state, land-grant college, and certain other libraries, that one library for each congressional district and two libraries at large for each state shall be selected by the Superintendent of Public Documents as depositories of government publications. The existing depository libraries are continued as permanent designations. This latter provision was taken from the printing bill and enacted into law by Congress in 1913, thus ending the privilege which members of congress had had since 1858 of changing at will the designation of depository libraries in their respective districts. This bit of so-called "political patronage" was given up without the slightest objection on the part of any member of Congress. It is also a credible fact that during the debates on the printing bill in either House not a single criticism has been made of any of the generous provisions relating to the library distribution of government publications. Nor has any opposition been manifest to the additional proposition that all future designations of depository libraries, whenever vacancies exist, shall be made by the Superintendent of Public Documents instead of by members of Congress, thus completely removing the libraries from the field of politics, if such a consideration has ever entered into their designation.

There are now 482 libraries on the mailing list of the Superintendent of Documents as designated depositories of government publications, while the total number of possible designations is 667. Thus 185 more libraries may become official depositories, if so designated under the present law by members of Congress, whose districts now have no such depositories.

#### **Publications for libraries**

Next in importance to their designation, are the number and character of publications that may be sent to depository libraries. It is the intention of the Printing Bill to make available for depository library distribution practically every publi-

cation issued by the government, whether congressional or departmental. The bill provides in section 80 that the Public Printer or any other government officer issuing publications shall furnish sufficient copies of each, whenever and wherever printed, for distribution to depository libraries. This provision, however, especially excepts from library distribution "matter ordered withheld as confidential, publications for the use of the courts or officers thereof, blank forms, and circulars not of a public character," which, of course, are not suitable for general library purposes. The section by its broad terms is intended to cover such printed matter as committee hearings and other committee publications which frequently are of great importance but are not now furnished depository libraries. It also includes the House and Senate Journals which now go to only three libraries in each state under special designations by the Superintendent of Documents that are abolished by the bill. The bill likewise makes the much sought Executive Journals of the Senate available to the depositories whenever printed and released to the public by order of the Senate. Another provision of the bill makes the daily as well as the bound edition of the "Congressional record" available for all depository libraries which will thus complete the sets of Congressional proceedings that are provided for library readers.

Additional assurance that the depositories will have access to all government publications is contained in the section which requires every establishment of the government to have practically all of its printing done at the Government Printing Office. This will end the present practice of some of the departments of having publications printed by private contractors which thus makes it impossible for the Superintendent of Documents to obtain copies for library distribution. The Postal Guide will be one of the more useful publications affected by this provision, which also prevents the War Department from having another valuable document

like its "American campaigns" printed in a private office where it is inaccessible for depository distribution. There is absolutely no occasion or excuse for any government publication to be printed elsewhere than at the Government Printing Office, which is the largest and best equipped printing plant in the world. The committee is determined that henceforth Uncle Sam shall print all of his own publications.

#### Exceptions in distribution

There are, however, certain publications that the bill expressly excepts from distribution to depository libraries. These include the bills of Congress, Supreme Court decisions and reports, Patent specifications, publications of the Hydrographic Office, Coast and Geodetic charts and pilots, and Geological maps and atlases.

In section 60 of the bill, it is provided that the reports and digests of decisions of the United States courts shall not be distributed to depository libraries. As before stated, section 80 also excepts from depository distribution such publications as are printed for the use of courts and their officers. This relates to briefs, pleadings, motions, and similar legal papers which, like the reports, are of no practical value in a general public library. These publications, if distributed by the government, should be sent out only to law libraries. Depository libraries and libraries of the courts of last resort in each state will, however, continue to receive the slips and session laws, Statutes-at-Large, and the Revised Statutes and Supplements.

Though patent specifications are excluded from distribution to depository libraries, any public library may obtain a copy of each patent specification with the accompanying drawings upon the payment of \$50 a year to the Commissioner of Patents. Such sets must be kept accessible for free public inspection. The bill as considered by the Sixty-third Congress restricted this privilege to only one library in each state, but under the pending measure any number of public libraries may receive the sets of patent specifications on

payment of the required fee. This distribution takes the place of the library edition of patent specifications and drawings which was abolished on recommendation of the Joint Committee in 1912. The patent specifications now made available to libraries are sent out in separate sheets which each library will have to bind at its own expense, amounting to five or six hundred dollars a year. It would cost a library or an individual fully \$1,500 a year to buy these specifications separately at the fixed price of 5 cents each. The nominal charge of \$50 a year to libraries is simply to prevent irresponsible requests for this costly set of publications which are of value to comparatively few libraries in large manufacturing centers.

In this connection, I call your attention to the fact that the bill abolishes the present "Patent gazette" distribution to eight libraries specially designated by each senator and member under existing law. The total possible designation at present is 4,488 libraries, of which only 1,813, or about one-third of the total number, have been made by members of Congress, indicating the small interest taken by libraries in the weekly "Patent gazette." The "Gazette" will, however, be available for depository distribution.

#### **Geological publications**

Geological maps and atlases for gratuitous distribution to foreign governments, literary and scientific associations, educational institutions and libraries, to be designated by the Director of the Geological Survey are limited to 500 copies which, I take it, prevents their distribution to depository libraries, as such. These maps and atlases, if desired by depository or other libraries, are to be obtained by direct application to the Geological Survey. Two copies of each map and atlas are also placed at the disposal of each member of Congress who, undoubtedly, will gladly donate his supply to interested libraries. The bill abolishes the special depositories of geological publications, including monographs, bulletins and reports, for which

each senator and member has been entitled to designate for public libraries. Out of a total possible designation of 2,144 libraries only 716 are now carried on the mailing list of the Superintendent of Documents. All the geological publications that have been sent to these special depositories will be included in the distribution to the libraries designated by the bill.

The publications of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, including charts, coast pilots, and tide tables, are specifically withdrawn from free distribution except as to a limited number of copies provided for the Secretary of Commerce and members of Congress. This provision seems to prevent library distribution by the Superintendent of Public Documents.

The Secretary of Commerce has 300 copies of the charts for presentation to such foreign governments, libraries, scientific associations and institutions of learning as he may direct. Ten copies of the Coast and Geodetic charts for each session of Congress and four copies of each Coast Pilot and Tide Table are also made available for distribution by members of Congress, which gives the libraries an opportunity to obtain such of these publications as they may desire.

Publications of the Hydrographic Office of the Navy Department are withdrawn entirely from free distribution "except for official use" and no copies are provided for library distribution either by the Navy Department itself or by members of Congress. These publications relate entirely to navigation and are extremely technical, including maps, charts, navigators' sailing directions, and instructions to seamen.

#### **Bills printed for Congress**

As for the bills, I do not know what the average depository library would do with such a flood of printed matter if it were to be let loose upon them. In the Sixty-third Congress the bills numbered almost 30,000, many of which were reprinted half a dozen times in the course of their consideration by the two Houses. The bound

set of bills for the Sixty-third Congress fills fully 20 feet of shelf space. The government itself preserves only six sets of bills in bound form, two each in the documents rooms of the Senate and the House and two in the Library of Congress. I understand that only two other libraries obtain full sets of bills. Your round table, I believe, has suggested that the text of a bill be printed in the accompanying report. It is evident that many of the reports now distributed to the depository libraries are of little value without the bills covered by such reports, but the reprinting of bills in the form of reports would entail a very large expense and be of little or no service to Congress itself, for Congress, as you know, considers bills in their regular form with lines numbered and every amendment to the original text carefully indicated according to line and page. Some committees, however, are beginning to include the text of important bills in their reports to make the presentation complete and more intelligible to the public. Perhaps the problem will work out its own solution in this way, but the Joint Committee on Printing has not been convinced as yet that the adoption of a hard and fast rule for the printing of bills with reports would be advisable.

As a measure of relief from the overwhelming stream of bills pouring in on Congress each session, it has been proposed in the Printing Bill to discontinue the printing of private pension and war claim bills when introduced. Instead it is planned to provide uniform blanks for the filing of pension and war claims which can then be referred to appropriate committees without printing, the same as petitions. This would do away with the useless printing of thousands of bills that never receive any further consideration from Congress. In the Sixty-first Congress 27,996 private pension bills were introduced, one member alone having presented more than 600 such bills. The committee estimates that \$80,000 a year can be saved by eliminating private pension and war claims bills from those printed for

Congress. This will greatly reduce the bulk of bills and may eventually make it possible to supply sets of bills to public libraries, perhaps at a nominal charge.

#### Selection plan proposed

After making available for distribution to depository libraries all the publications of the Government, with a few exceptions I have just discussed, the bill proposes that depository libraries may select such of the publications as they desire to receive. As a matter of fact, practically all depositories have already been compelled by the tremendous increase of government publications in recent years to select and retain from the numerous documents unloaded on them only such as they could afford to give shelf space. The result has been that for many years more than 100,000 documents have been returned to the Superintendent of Documents annually by depository libraries. This self-adopted selection plan has been a most wasteful one but it appears to have been the only relief possible under the present method of depository distribution. When depository libraries were first established by the government it undoubtedly was the intention that they should receive and preserve complete sets of all public documents. It was easy to comply with this requirement when less than 100 documents a year were issued by the government but now that the number of publications sent to depository libraries exceeds 2,000 annually only a few libraries can give shelf space to such an enormous accession.

The selection plan, as set forth in section 79, paragraph 2, of the bill, proposes that the Superintendent of Public Documents shall give advance notice, as far as possible, concerning the issuance of government publications available for library distribution. Annual, serial, and periodical publications may be selected at the beginning of a year and reasonable changes during the year are to be permitted in the discretion of the superintendent. Any depository desiring a copy of every government publication available

for library distribution will be so supplied if it convinces the Superintendent of Public Documents that it is prepared to make all such publications accessible to the public. I believe that this latter provision will, or at least ought to, compel nearly every depository library to adopt the selection plan.

As a matter of fact, the Superintendent of Documents is even now planning to put the selection plan into operation without waiting for the passage of the printing bill. He takes the view that, as the plan has already been approved by both the House and the Senate, he is justified in making a liberal interpretation of the present law so as to permit its voluntary adoption. Of course, without additional legislation such as is proposed by the bill, no depository can be compelled to make selection of the publications to be furnished it, or denied the complete depository set if it so demands. When the Superintendent of Documents first undertook to adopt this selection plan in 1914 he ascertained that 276 of the depository libraries were willing to enter into such an arrangement, which would insure the success of the plan and effect a material economy in the library distribution. I quote the following from the Annual Report of the Superintendent of Documents for 1915:

#### **Selections at early date**

"We receive many requests from the libraries asking relief from the present burden of caring for so many publications by granting them the privilege of selection instead of being compelled, as now, to receive all that are printed. This selection plan has the sanction of the Joint Committee on Printing, and as the debate on this feature of the printing bill in both Houses of Congress has not developed any opposition, it is my purpose to consider putting the selection plan into operation at as early a date as possible."

The question arises in my mind as to how much latitude should be allowed depository libraries in their selection of government publications. The designation of

certain libraries as depositories imposes a duty on them that does not obtain as to other libraries. The name "depository library" itself seems to imply an obligation to receive and preserve the publications intrusted to such library by the government. It is a notice to the public that the printed records of the government are there on deposit and available to all without price or preference. The purpose of designating a depository library in each congressional district was to provide convenient and equitably distributed places where the people may have access to the publications of their government. Improper and inadequate selections by a depository library would defeat the very object of its designation.

The bill specifically requires a depository library carefully to preserve all the publications it shall receive from the government and provides that if such a depository shall cease to be a free public library or for any other sufficient cause becomes unfit to be a designated depository of government publications, the Superintendent of Public Documents shall direct the return of such publications. This provision may be construed as giving the superintendent authority to require depositories to make proper and adequate selections by virtue of his power to declare a library, for "sufficient cause," unfit to continue as a government depository. In any event, there seems to be no doubt that such authority may be exercised by the superintendent as to future designations through the provision that these designations shall be made by him under such rules and regulations as are approved by the Joint Committee on Printing.

#### **May classify depositories**

By the adoption of proper regulations, it might be possible so to classify the depository libraries as to insure that adequate and suitable sets of government publications may be obtainable in all of such libraries. The failure of the present law relating to depository libraries is due chiefly to the fact that it treats big and

little libraries all alike. There ought to be an intelligent regulation of this distribution to meet the needs and capacity of the respective libraries.

The Superintendent of Documents reports that last year he sent 2,130 different publications to each of the 482 depository libraries. Congressional documents and reports for the Sixty-third Congress alone numbered 5,309, which were bound in 352 volumes. The number of Congressional documents and reports from the Fifteenth to the Sixty-third Congress, inclusive, totaled 182,537 which were bound, according to serial numbers, into 6,894 volumes. A number of depository libraries have received the greater portion of these volumes in addition to hundreds of other government publications that did not form a part of the congressional sets. Is it any wonder that they have reached the breaking point in their capacity to further provide accessible space for the documents that are being unloaded upon them at an ever-increasing rate? What will the depositories do when the entire field of government publications is made accessible to them as proposed by the bill? It is evident that only the largest could survive such a flood without the relief to be found in the selection plan. I am sure, nevertheless, the committee does not want that privilege turned into a license to ignore the special responsibilities that rest upon a depository of government publications.

In an effort to end duplication and delay in the distribution to depository libraries Congress, in 1907, adopted a resolution prepared by the Joint Committee and representatives of the American Library Association, providing that all annual and serial publications originating in the executive departments should not be numbered in the document series of Congress even though ordered printed by either House. That plan, however, proved unworkable at the outset.

#### **Need of numbered documents**

In the first place, the Senate and the House document rooms found that they

could not handle with the requisite promptness the vast quantities of unnumbered documents which came to them under this new arrangement. The resolution took the congressional number off fully two-thirds of the publications that were printed for distribution through the document rooms of Congress and utterly disorganized the work of those document rooms which are of special importance to Congress in that they supply the reports and documents that are of immediate use to members for legislative purposes.

To store away temporarily hundreds or thousands of copies of a single document is a far different proposition from that of finding permanent shelf space for only one or two copies. No fixed space can be provided in the document rooms for all of the publications that they have to distribute, as the copies remaining at the close of each session have to be moved back into more remote store-rooms to give space in front for the incoming documents of the next session, which must be easily accessible. Years of experience in this work have convinced the document room superintendents that all the publications for their distribution should have an identifying number printed thereon, not only as a stock label for their vast stores of documents, but also for the convenience of congressmen in sending for such publications. This document number furnishes a simple and certain guide to the documents printed for the use of Congress and is of special value in view of the numerous duplications and the frequent confusing similarity of titles.

The numbers, which are assigned congressional documents by the Public Printer in the order received, are generally inserted in the Congressional Record when the document is ordered printed and consequently can be at once adopted by the Public Printer, the Superintendent of Documents, the document rooms, all the government officials, libraries, and the public in general as the identifying number under which to record, print, catalog, store, order, or distribute such publica-



tion. No other method seems to be capable of so many uses or so simple of operation.

#### Senate and House Libraries

In the second place, the removal of the annual and serial publications from the numbered series, while still continuing to print them as Congressional documents, caused a serious break in the sets of documents that the Senate and House libraries have retained in complete numerical order for nearly 100 years. These libraries are of the first consideration to Congress for they contain the only permanent files of documents and reports printed by both Houses that are kept in the Capitol. They must have copies of all congressional documents and reports ready for immediate response to any call that may come from the floor of their respective Houses. In addition, these libraries are constantly used by members engaged in research work and the document numbers furnish the only index that is available to them in consulting the thousands of publications that have been issued by the Government. Of course, the libraries at the Capitol could adopt the card system of indexing their accessions the same as other libraries, but it appears to me this would be a needless task in view of the fact that the document numbers, which are necessary for other purposes, already furnish such an index.

At any rate, Congress soon became convinced that the numbering of all documents and reports submitted to it was essential to the proper transaction of its business and that a serious mistake had been made in further dividing the reports and documents printed for its information into a numbered and an unnumbered series. It was therefore determined by the Joint Resolution of January 15, 1908, to restore to the numbered series all annual and serial publications submitted to Congress by the departments, but, as a concession to the librarians who had so strongly urged the removal of these publications from the congressional series, it

was provided that copies of such annuals and serials for depository distribution should be printed and bound under plain titles the same as the departmental editions. This arrangement made the annuals and serials available for the depositories much earlier than had been possible when they were bound in the numbered congressional sets and had to be withheld by the Superintendent of Documents until the volume and serial numbers could be assigned such sets.

Even this change has, to my mind, been a most unfortunate one in that it has practically abolished the congressional set of documents for library distribution and has continued the wasteful and confusing practice of issuing the same publication under two or more titles. Fully two-thirds of the documents that properly belong in the congressional sets owing to their having been assigned congressional document numbers are now supplied the depository libraries under plain titles with no indication whatever that they are also congressional documents. The result may be seen in your House documents for the Sixty-third Congress, third session. These documents were bound in 109 volumes, yet, out of the entire series, only 15 were supplied to the depositories with binder's titles and volume numbers indicating that they were properly House documents. It seems absurd to give volume numbers to only 15 out of 109 volumes, jumping, as they do, from 4 to 20 and then again from 21 to 101. Of the 352 volumes of congressional documents and reports for the Sixty-third Congress, 235 were sent to the depositories with plain titles. The remaining 117 volumes were given volume numbers without any regard for their sequence and they can only be shelved in complete sets by filling in the gaps with the plain-titled documents bound in as many colors as Joseph's coat. If it is the desire to abolish the depository sets of congressional documents, that task ought to be completed by wiping out the few remaining traces of the once imposing, and, in many libraries, highly cherished array of

uniformly-bound reports and documents of Congress. As a matter of fact, the Superintendent of Documents has submitted such a proposition to the Joint Committee on Printing but no action has been taken on it as the committee is not inclined to make any further changes in the depository sets until the pending bill has been disposed of.

#### **Congressional series restricted**

The committee believes that it is first necessary to determine once and for all what documents shall be included in the congressional set and what documents shall be treated as departmental publications, and to then require that such designations shall be fixed for all purposes. In other words, it is proposed to end the present publication of the same document in both the congressional and the departmental editions. The bill provides in section 36 that "no publication provided for by law or issued by any executive department, independent office, or establishment of the Government shall be printed as a numbered document or report of Congress, but shall be designated by its original title if reprinted by order of either House, except that reports required by law or resolution to be submitted to Congress, or either House thereof, shall be designated for all purposes as numbered documents thereof, and all reprints of congressional publications shall bear the original title and number thereof."

In effect, this provision restricts congressional documents to those publications the original print of which is ordered by resolution of either House and to such reports as the departments and various officers of the Government are required to submit to Congress. This provision eliminates from the congressional series such publications as the bulletins, monographs, professional, and water-supply papers of the Geological Survey, bulletins relating to ethnology, fisheries, the hygienic laboratory, and the yellow fever institute, and publications of the Naval Observatory, Pan-American Union, and National Academy of Sciences, none of which is of any practical service

to Congress for legislative purposes, and consequently are not needed in the document rooms at the Capitol.

The failure of the resolution of 1907 was partly due to the fact that, after taking publications I have just mentioned out of the numbered congressional series, it continued their distribution through the document rooms.

Under the plan now proposed only numbered documents and reports will be supplied the document rooms of Congress and hence strictly departmental publications, such as I have enumerated, will not be included in the congressional series in any form. The committee has, in fact, already undertaken to limit the document room distribution to its original purpose of supplying only such documents, reports, and bills as are of immediate value to Congress in the preparation of legislation. By way of experiment the committee directed that none of the serial publications just referred to should be furnished the document rooms of either House. This test has confirmed the committee's opinion that departmental publications having no legislative value should be kept out of the congressional series. It is impossible, however, to remove them from the numbered series until the Printing Bill is enacted into law.

#### **Reports submitted to Congress**

On the other hand, the committee is just as firm in the opinion that all reports which are required to be submitted to Congress for its information and guidance should be printed as congressional documents. Though originating in the departments these reports are intended principally for the use of Congress, and, in fact, their preparation is directed by Congress. The records and files of Congress must contain the reports submitted to it in proper and convenient form and that appears to be possible only by their publication as numbered documents of the House to which they may be submitted. If these reports were comparatively few in number it might be possible to adopt some other method of designating them as re-

ports that have been submitted to Congress for its consideration. The fact is, more than 400 reports are required by law to be regularly submitted to Congress and, in addition, scores of special reports are called for by resolutions each session. It has been the rule and practice of the Government since its first organization to record reports submitted to Congress as a part of the papers of Congress, and, for nearly 100 years now, these reports have been printed as numbered documents of either the House or the Senate. I am under the impression that this practice is likewise observed by many state and foreign governments in the compilation and binding of their legislative and administrative reports in serial form.

This proposition of the committee, that all reports submitted to Congress shall be designated as numbered documents of Congress in printing the same for the use of both the legislative and executive branches of the Government, does not necessarily require that such reports shall be bound in sets for depository libraries. The bill now pending before Congress does not contain the requirement of previous printing bills that reports submitted to Congress shall be bound the same as other congressional documents. That language has been stricken out of the bill and the House has already approved this change.

The bill furthermore does not contain any reference, as such, to "sets" of congressional numbered documents and reports or other publications, or make any requirement that they shall be bound in sets for depository library distribution. The matter of such binding is to be done under the direction of the Joint Committee on Printing. In this connection the committee undoubtedly will give consideration to the Superintendent of Documents' proposition to eliminate the volume number from the binder's title for all the congressional series and to make the actual title of each separate publication the principal title, with a secondary title indicating the document number, congress, and session.

#### "One edition" for documents

Such a plan would, I believe, finally bring about the much desired "one edition" for government publications, the printing bill preventing the duplication of congressional and departmental editions and the proposed binding regulation cutting out the duplications that now obtain in printing and cataloging a congressional document under its own number and also under the volume number of the library sets. The plan would seem to meet the wishes of those who desire binder's titles suitable for classifying their government publications according to subjects, and would also permit other libraries to continue shelving their government publications in sets according to numerical sequence. In case of the latter, the serial number could be adopted instead of the volume number. As a matter of fact, the volume number is of no particular value when the serial number is used, except that it is printed in the document index by the Superintendent of Documents who could as readily substitute the serial number for the volume number if the committee can persuade the Senate and House libraries to have their sets marked with the serial instead of the volume number.

These two libraries are now the only ones receiving uniformly bound sets of congressional documents, including the annuals and serials, that do not have the serial number as part of the back title. The Library of Congress and the library of the Superintendent of Documents, which also are supplied with complete sets of congressional documents, use the serial numbers, and, I have been informed, the serial number is also used as the call-number for public documents in numerous libraries.

Of course, if the documents are to be sent to depositories as soon as published, the serial number will have to be furnished later and affixed by the library itself just as at present, for these numbers cannot be assigned until the four series of Senate and House documents and reports are practically completed. Whatever slight dis-

advantage there may be in this arrangement is more than offset, I believe, by the fact that the libraries could receive all of their congressional volumes practically as soon as printed. Under the present plan, aside from the plain-titled volumes, the depositories do not get the more important Senate and House documents until they can be assigned volume numbers, which delays their distribution sometimes for several months after the close of a session.

In view of the proposed prompt distribution of all congressional documents, the bill abolishes the preliminary distribution to libraries of unbound documents containing less than 100 pages.

#### Non-depository libraries

So much as to the depository libraries. You perhaps are asking, of what interest is the bill to the vastly greater number of libraries that have not the special privileges of a government depository. Suggestion has been offered that the committee ought to make provision whereby any public library could obtain publications free of charge from a central distributing point such as the Superintendent of Documents. The Bureau of Education has a list of more than 18,000 libraries in the United States. If these libraries were to be accorded free access to all the government publications they might want, we would at once have 18,000 depository libraries in the United States. With government publications as the prize in a free-for-all grab-bag, there soon wouldn't be a library in the entire country with less than 5,000 or 6,000 public documents, regardless of its need of such publications. Uncle Sam's books make a fine beginning for any embryonic but ambitious library that is temporarily short on fiction.

Seriously, though, the bill does offer an excellent opportunity for the non-depository libraries to obtain desirable government publications. I refer to the valuation plan for the distribution of documents by members of Congress. At present senators and members are annually allotted small quotas of certain publications, principally

annual reports and other documents of a more or less perfunctory character. The few really important documents that they receive are usually ordered printed by special resolutions and the limited quotas of these are generally exhausted before the average librarian gets around to ask her congressman for a copy. The committee has ascertained that the reprint value of the documents so allotted to members of Congress has averaged for many years approximately \$1,800 a year for members of the House and \$2,200 a year for senators. It is, therefore, proposed to allow each senator and member such a book credit annually with the Superintendent of Public Documents who shall supply them with publications available to the amount specified. Some publications are listed in the bill as subject to valuation distribution. These include, in addition to the documents heretofore allotted to congressmen, all the publications of the following departments and bureaus in which the public is specially interested: the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor, the Public Health Service, the Bureau of Education, the Geological Survey, and the Bureau of Mines. Comparatively few of the publications of these departments and bureaus are now available for distribution by congressmen and then only in very limited quantities. The valuation credit of each member is also to be available for such other publications as congress may order printed from time to time, like the report of the recent Industrial Relations Commission.

#### Documents from congressmen

Under this plan, an alert librarian can obtain practically as complete a set of the more important Government publications as is sent to the depository libraries. Senators and representatives have a personal interest in the libraries of their own states and districts, and, I believe, the non-depository libraries, especially the smaller ones, will fare better at the hands of members of Congress, who are thus closer in touch with them, than they would if the

Superintendent of Public Documents were vested with optional authority to supply such libraries. If you approve this valuation plan, you ought so to advise your senators and members, especially the latter as they seem to hesitate over its adoption.

In addition to this, however, the bill does provide that the Superintendent of Public Documents may supply such libraries as are suitable custodians of government publications with copies whenever there is a surplus in his office after filling the requests of the regular depositories. This is a rather indefinite provision but it is susceptible of expansion into one of great service to the non-depository libraries.

There are also several provisions in the bill specifically authorizing distribution by the departments of certain valuable publications such as patent specifications, daily commerce reports, coast and geodetic

charts, and geological maps and atlases to libraries. I am rather inclined to believe that the bill will be amended to also provide the daily Congressional Record for every free public library in the United States.

It seems to me, therefore, that the interests of the libraries, both depository and non-depository, have been well cared for in the bill and that the measure will be of much benefit to them when it is enacted into law. I am sure every member of the Joint Committee on Printing has had the welfare of the libraries foremost in his thoughts in the preparation of the bill. That it may be still further improved is undoubtedly true, for we have not yet reached the millennium in legislation. The committee believes, however, that there is enough of merit in the bill to justify fully its prompt enactment by Congress.

#### GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS AS SEEN IN LIBRARIES—WITH A PROGRAM OF BETTERMENTS IN THE PUBLIC PRINTING

BY EDITH E. CLARKE, *Auburn, N. Y.*

From my recent trip to California and back, visiting libraries all the way, and inquiring as to government publications everywhere, and my efforts in different library schools to make the government publications clear to and manageable by young recruits in librarianship, together with my experience in the Documents Office and depository libraries, I have gathered and offer you here a few observations. I will give you first my observations, and follow these with a program of betterments which, if carried out, would, according to my judgment, remedy the difficulties which the libraries experience, and put the national publications and their distribution on a basis of efficiency equal to that of private publishers. And as I shall speak only of the publications of the United States government, let me omit the country, for brevity's sake, in all I have to say.

First, Government publications as seen

in libraries. I will take this up under the three topics: 1) Use; 2) Supply; 3) Treatment in libraries.

1) Use. Diversity is the keyword to the use made of the government publications a) in different parts of the country and b) by different kinds of libraries. a) I have been greatly impressed by the difference between the kinds of publications called for in this part of the country and in the western and Pacific states. And let me say that the libraries of the west that came under my observation do an amount of active reference work with the national publications which puts to the blush some of our less wide-awake eastern libraries. But here in the east the demand is all for works on banking, finance, transportation, manufacturing and the tariff, labor and immigration, and international relations. In the west the call is for publications on Indians, public lands, forestry, conserva-